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You Are His

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You Are His

Abstract

"When we experience trials, our faith grows stronger, and our children see the realities of this hard life and the depth of security that a relationship with Christ can bring."

Posting about knowing we are children of God from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/you-are-his/>

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You Are His

 inallthings.org/you-are-his/

Tara Boer

December 19, 2017



“But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” (Isaiah 43:1)

Few things are more terrifying than driving to a first trimester doctor’s appointment after going through previous miscarriages. I found myself in this position a few months ago and could not slow down the racing thoughts filled with worst-case scenarios. My stomach churned as I thought about the possibility of having to break bad news to my husband and get having to get through a work week.

Then, God met me at a stoplight through the Chris Tomlin song “Good Good Father.”

I’m this child’s father, I heard.

Tears began to swell in my eyes as God clearly reminded me that the children I have been given are not really “mine.” They are gifts He has given to us so that we might point them to Him, His kingdom, and a life of service.

The doctor appointment went “perfectly.” I walked away feeling somewhat embarrassed by the doubt and cautiously excited about adding another child to our family.

The emotions in this scenario are common for me. I am high-strung and an energetic person by nature, but after having my first child, my low-grade (often functional) anxiety climbed a big hill and peaked with frequent episodes of anger, bitterness, and constant frustration with almost everyone around me. I was comforted when my despair led to research which suggested that having a child actually changes the brain’s chemistry, a process sometimes called “neural remodeling,” in post-partum moms. These changes allow mothers to protect and comfort by instinct, as well as to sense those baby whimpers and wet diapers that spouses seemingly miss in the middle of the night.

As my children grew older, my anxiety morphed into constant impatience, loud reactions to small mistakes, and emotional responses to anticipated failure and fear. My identity as a parent had not been secured, and I wallowed in self-doubt. Here is what He told me.

I was driven to my knees, and my Father spoke to me about what I needed to know as a parent.

“You do not have to do it all.”

I have seen it all too often in the lives of my friends, clients, and co-workers. Our on-the-go, do-it-right, constant-comparison spirits can leave us drained, frustrated, and bitter. Over the years, I have learned to work towards establishing concrete ways to share the load in our home. My husband and I both work full-time out of the home and have found that equally sharing both household and parenting responsibilities strengthens our marriage and our appreciation for each other (and our children). This equal responsibility is not accomplished in all homes. McKinsey and co. conducted a “Women in the Workplace” study in 2017 and reported that, on average, “54 percent of women do all or most of the household work, compared to 22 percent of men. This gap grows when couples have children. Women with a partner and children are 5.5 times more likely than their male counterparts to do all or most of the household work and even when women are primary breadwinners, they do more work at home.”

In comparison, I feel better knowing I do not have to do it all. You don’t have to either.

“Parenting out of fear leads to frustration and disconnected relationships with your kids.”

It is very possible that my two-year-old will one day develop a stutter or be diagnosed with ADHD. My four-year-old could someday suffer from depression or anxiety. One or both of them could turn out to be gay, act promiscuous, or fail out of school. Although I pray that God protect them from these things and consequential hardships, I have seen the goodness of the Lord through some of the most difficult situations in families. Neighbors come together, support groups form, churches pray, parents lament and are humbled when things get hard. If we take the time to reflect, many of us will see how God has carried us as we trudged along during times of doubt and pain.

When we experience trials, our faith grows stronger, and our children see the realities of this hard life and the depth of security that a relationship with Christ can bring.

I believe that God longs to redeem family baggage plagued by cycles of dysfunction. I also

“Your past makes you who you are.”

We are shaped by our upbringing, and so is our parenting. We are products of our families, our homes, our churches, and our communities. I have found that it is worth taking an honest and Scripture-infused inventory to get rid of some things that may not actually be contributing to the God-honoring legacy I want to leave for my children. The things we view as “truth” may be lies given to us by the world instead of truth from our Father. Ultimately, I think it is important to name and celebrate what God has brought you through and teach your children to see God’s faithfulness along the way too.

I love to give my children direction, guidance, and teaching in better ways to live. I think God longs to do these things for us, too. As you spend time with your children, young and old, this Christmas season, remember that it is never too late to ask God what things He may want you to change as a parent. Lamentations 3:22-23 says, “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness.” We may not get it right the first time, but there is grace as we walk this journey.

As we anticipate adding a third child to our family, I trust in my good, good Father’s plan for my kids and my family.

To me, that is the most peaceful place I can be right now.

I hope you find it, too.